

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Blatantly trying to influence this election by airing a 90 minute political advertisement does not serve the public interest and clearly is a direct violation of campaign finance laws. What would all these stations charge for 90 minutes of prime-time advertising? The FCC should step up in supporting the Democratic party complaint regarding this violation by pointing out to Sinclair Broadcasting that it clearly is an "in-kind" political donation and thus, illegal.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. More importantly, community input regarding wide-ranging programming particularly in small markets must be protected, and consolidated ownership of limited stations must not be allowed, because it leads to such abuse as demonstrated by Sinclair Broadcasting. Thank you.